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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development
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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

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II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1 - Election of officers

1. Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the main Committee of the Trade and Development Board states that: "At the commencement of the first meeting of each regular session, the Committee shall elect a Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of its members. These officers shall constitute the Bureau of the Committee. In electing the officers, due account shall be taken of the need to ensure an equitable geographical distribution". Moreover, rule 19 indicates that "the Bureau of the Committee shall consist of seven members, including four members from Groups A and C combined, two members from Group B and one member from Group D, referred to in the annex to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) as amended" (the revised lists of States annexed to the General Assembly resolution is contained in the report of the forty-third session of the Board, TD/B/43/12 (Vol.I)). In line with those arrangements, the Commission is required to elect a Chairman, five Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur to constitute the Bureau of its first session.

Item 2 - Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda in section I above was approved by the Trade and Development Board at its thirteenth executive session (8, July 1996). [1] As provided for in the UNCTAD calendar of meetings, the Commission will have available five working days from 20 to 24 January 1997. At the first plenary meeting, on 20 January 1997, an opening statement will be made by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD or his representative, followed by the introduction of item 3 and the general debate on this item. It is suggested that the rest of Monday 20 January and the morning of Tuesday 21 January 1997 be devoted to formal and informal discussions on item 3. On the afternoon of Tuesday 21 January, while continuing consideration of item 3, the Commission will also start its consideration of item 5 as it relates to item 3. On the morning of Wednesday 22 January 1997 the Commission will conclude consideration of item 3. On the afternoon of Wednesday 22 January 1997, an introductory statement will be made on item 4 of the agenda. The consideration of this item, in both an informal and formal setting, will continue until the afternoon of Thursday 23 January 1997. On Thursday afternoon, 23 January, the Commission will start consideration of item 5 as it relates to item 4. The Commission will conclude consideration of items 4 and 5 on Friday morning 24 January 1997. The report of the Commission will be adopted on the afternoon of Friday 24 January 1997.

Item 3 - Enterprise: issues relating to an enterprise development strategy

3. The annotations on this item agreed upon at the thirteenth executive session of the Trade and Development Board read as follows: "The new dynamics of production and of enterprise development engendered by globalization, liberalization and technological change have focused attention on the need for developing and other countries to adopt a comprehensive and coherent national strategy for enterprise development, with a particular focus on SMEs, that will enable them to build up their enterprises as an essential instrument of development and of their enhanced participation in the world economy. While such a strategy is important for countries at all levels of development, it is particularly important for least developed countries which lack a mature enterprise or SME sector and which need to build up such a sector. Attention will be given to the main elements of such a strategy, including the policy and institutional implications, with a view to contributing to the identification of policy options, at both national and

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1 Report of the Trade and development Board on its thirteenth executive session (TD/B/EX(13)/2), annex III. C.

international levels, to enhance the role of domestic enterprises in development and in the global economy. Discussion on this issue will be facilitated by exchange of relevant experience. Particular reference will be made to (i) the role of Government-private sector dialogue in promoting enterprise development; (ii) measures of support for fostering the creation, development, efficiency, competitiveness and internationalization of enterprises, particularly SMEs, including through the establishment of enterprise linkages, both domestic and international, and issues of interrelationship between enterprise development and technology; and (iii) measures to address the effects of structural adjustment policies on enterprise development." [2]

4. Accordingly, the report for this session of the Commission contained in TD/B/COM.3/2 discusses:

(i) major developments and related policy issues concerning the changing nature of enterprises and of international competition;

(ii) national determinants of enterprise development and competitiveness in developing countries, with particular reference to LDCs, as well as in economies in transition; and

(iii) key issues relating to an enterprise development strategy, including an identification of areas for further work in respect of each issue, as well as the policy implications.

The latter topic can provide subjects for cross-country exchanges of national experiences at the Commission, which can help to identify policy elements for the formulation of enterprise development strategies, as well as supportive international action. The Commission may also wish to decide on a future work programme, including the identification of particular topics for further detailed consideration by expert meetings.

Item 4 - Services infrastructure for development and trade efficiency assessment

5. Te annotations on this item agreed upon at the thirteenth executive session of the Trade and Development Board read as follows: "UNCTAD's primary role in this sector is to assist developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, and countries in transition, in generating trade-supporting services such as customs, transportation, banking and insurance, telecommunications or business information which are adapted to their particular requirements. Several of these areas were also identified by the United Nations International Symposium on Trade Efficiency held in Columbus in October 1994, as being able significantly to improve participation in international trade (especially of weaker and small players). Within each of these sectors, the Commission can contribute to identifying priorities among the relevant policy issues and practical measures for a rapid enhancement of the objectives of trade efficiency worldwide, with special attention to the least developed countries. In this context, the Commission will be in a position to examine the possibility to invite experts to meet and address sectoral and cross-sectoral issues relevant to the follow-up of UNISTE. Based on the outcome of this work and that of the Commission itself, it will then be the Commission's responsibility to identify and pursue the policy opportunities raised by the Trade Efficiency Assessment exercise called for by UNCTAD IX. The Commission will take into account the close cooperation between UNCTAD, ECE, ITC and other relevant international organizations on these issues. An area of particular and immediate importance to most developing countries and economies in transition is that of transit, in which the practical experience acquired by UNCTAD (through programmes like ACIS, ASYCUDA and its work on corridor agreements), as well as the availability

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2 Ibid., item 3.

of new technologies, represents a capital that could be brought to rapid fruition. It is proposed that the Commission convene a first expert meeting to define the avenues and tools required to simplify implementation of transit agreements." [3]

6. Accordingly, the report for this session of the Commission contained in TD/B/COM.3/3 includes three parts:

(i) It describes the overall rationale, philosophy and originality of UNCTAD's work in the area of sServices infrastructure for development and trade efficiency, and its relevance to the needs of smaller players in a globalizing world economy;

(ii) It describes UNCTAD's work in each of the six trade-supporting areas addressed by UNISTE (Customs, transport, banking and insurance, trade facilitation, business information, and telecommunications) as well as in three major cross-sectoral areas (transit, human resources development, and legal issues). For each of these areas, the report offers answers to the following three major questions: What are the issues addressed? What are the actions envisaged and their development impact? In the coming year, what would be UNCTAD's priorities and what the expected results?

(iii) Practical proposals are made regarding future work of the Commission and UNCTAD, with special attention to the Trade Efficiency Assessment called for by UNCTAD IX.

Item 5 - Provisional agenda for the second session of the Commission and any necessary preparation through expert meetings

7. Paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report of the thirteenth session of the Trade and Development Board indicate that the draft provisional agenda and annotations for the first session of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development was approved on the understandings that, when items 3 and 4 are taken up by the Commission, a review should be undertaken of the work to be done in the future and that the documentation prepared for these two items should also include the proposed future work programme of the Commission. The Commission may wish to establish the provisional agenda for its second session on the basis of its deliberation during its first session. In the UNCTAD indicative calendar of meetings for 1997, the second session of the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development is tentatively scheduled to take place from 1 to 5 December 1997.

Item 6 - Other business

8. Under this item, delegations may wish to raise any matter not covered under the other agenda items.

Item 7 - Adoption of the report of the Commission to the Trade and Development Board

9. The report of the Commission on its first session will be considered by the Trade and Development Board at its pre-sessional executive session to the forty-fourth session.

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[3] Ibid., item 4.